

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

APRIL 12, 1935



GERTRUDE STEIN COMMA

BY ELLA WINTER

CHRISTIAN vs. COMMUNIST

BY RAY N. STUDDT

PASSION IN A BUGHOUSE

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

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THE THEATER

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PACIFIC WEEKLY CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

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PACIFIC WEEKLY

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FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 1935

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NOTES AND COMMENT

THE most exciting occurrence of the week, for PACIFIC WEEKLY at least—exciting but not important—was the forced withdrawal of the magazine from the newsstands of this little town of Carmel which happens to be the location of our editorial and publication offices. Newsstand owners who took the magazine from their stands and now refuse to carry it, tell us that they were forced to do so by a committee from the American Legion. Individual Legion members deny that the Carmel Post is behind the action, but there has been no denial from the Post itself. Therefore, and there is little doubt of it, PACIFIC WEEKLY assumes that it is a Legion action and will continue so to assume until from the Legion comes an official denial.

There are several reasons for assuming that the Legion is behind the action; has, in fact, inspired and perpetrated it. The principal reason is the matter of motive. The Legion certainly has a motive. PACIFIC WEEKLY has never minced words in its opinion of the American Legion as it is now controlled by reactionary forces in its ranks. When the Legion, as an organization of former service men, cleans its house; when it ceases to attempt organized hold-up of the United States treasury to the detriment of thousands upon thousands of citizens who need government aid to a higher percentage of necessity than appears in the Legion; when it ceases to foment agitation against sincere and intelligent forces battling sincerely and intelligently for the common good; when it stops its damnable military propaganda in the schools and stops wasting the money of its members through the staging of senseless Americanism programs that have no bearing whatsoever on the problems of the day—when the American Legion does these things PACIFIC WEEKLY will cease from exposing its absurdities and support it as a perfectly permissible organization of men with common memories and a fraternal spirit that could and should stand for better things.

ON WEDNESDAY a new trial for the eight convicted defendants in the Criminal Syndicalism cases in Sacramento was denied and they were sentenced to one to 14 years in State's Prison. This in spite of the fact that one juror had sworn an affidavit that he thought them guiltless and that he

had concurred in the verdict only to reach a compromise. The two defendants recommended for probation were not granted probation. Execution of sentence was delayed until the decision on whether an appeal is to be allowed or not is made. Meanwhile Judge Lemmon again remanded the convicted defendants to jail until he decides whether and what bail be allowed. This although all defendants had been out on bail for months.

This case again proved that California is the leading state in the Union in reaction. Last week mass pressure won a number of victories: the Supreme Court ruled that the Scottsboro boys must be re-indicted and issued a firm reproof to the Southern courts for not admitting Negroes to jury panels. The Department of Immigration dropped the deportation case against John Strachey causing jubilation in the ranks of reds and consternation at the ludicrousness of the whole case in the ranks of "sober, responsible Americans". The cases against Berkeley students arrested for issuing anti-war handbills in the town were dropped, and an ordinance is being drawn to make handbill distribution permissible. And every suspected "red" (which means in California every liberal suspected of upholding the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) dropped from the SERA at American Legion agitation was reinstated. These were substantial and important victories. Only in Sacramento the authorities, like Pharaoh, seem to need ten plagues to make them let the people go. And so it is important to rain upon the assemblymen and senators, Governor and U. S. Attorney Webb letters and postcards and telegrams demanding the cases be dismissed against the labor leaders and union organizers who successfully raised agricultural wages in California.

There is an assembly bill No. 419 to abolish the un-American class act called the Criminal Syndicalism Law. The bill was defeated in Committee by 11 to 9, but can be re-introduced on the floor of the house if forty-one assemblymen request it. More than half this number are enthusiastically in favor of this bill. It is important for the good name of California, for the upholding of our ancient liberties, freedom of press, speech and assembly, freedom of opinion and thought, to abolish the Criminal Syndicalism act. Its abolition has been endorsed by true Americans in every walk of life and every profession—by Church and labor groups, intellectuals and liberals, professors and students. Those who wish to keep this vicious act on the books are a small minority of Pharaoh-like bankers, big employers and their henchmen, the American Legion.

THE student anti-war strike scheduled for April 12 will be participated in by 100,000 students in America—a good ten per cent of the student body of the country. College presidents in several colleges have endorsed the strike. Stanford University granted the hour off to all students. But U. C. L. A. has arrested more students for distributing handbills and President MacQuarrie of San Jose State Teachers College expelled a girl student for being in favor of abolishing war and saying so. Indeed, as Robinson Jeffers recently said in a poem published in *Scribner's*, the war for freedom has to be carried on unrelentingly. And part of the war is to make it clear over and over again who stands for real freedom and who stands for tyranny, selfishness, and the rule of greed.

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

NO WAR but it did rain this last week; it precipitated as it used to in the old days before this state was developed, when Californians predominated.

STANLEY BALDWIN, the boss of England, calls Europe mad. He means that it is harder to govern than Great Britain and yet, considering that no conservative statesman understands the forces at work in the modern world, the Messrs. Baldwin are doing pretty well for themselves.

THE RIVERS at Sacramento are risen to flood heights, reminding me of my hopeful kidhood when a wet winter set me watching and praying for an actual inundation. The grown-ups talked floods and fears in those days also, as they do now, but all I could see were brimming rivers and promising cellars, cellars with some dirty water in them but never enough to float a boat or a raft. And I secretly wanted to row around our cellar and the streets. The responsible citizens were against anything of the sort and they always had their way.

"Yea," said Charlie Reed, a kid whose father had a big ranch over in Yolo County, "whenever the Sacramento River gets up, you send guys over to cut our levees and flood our county." I didn't, of course. I would rather have had my own city and county flooded. I would, as I am telling you, have liked to see the water rise to the capitol cupola. And I denied Charlie's charge with heat and regret. But on sounding around among honest men who might tell a kid the truth I came gradually to believe that patriotic citizens of my thriving city did actually break levees and let the river loose in Yolo and so disappoint my rising hope to sail boats in Sacramento city and county. I owned no real estate then as Charlie Reed did, but I privily shared his indignation at Sacramento real estate and sports.

GERTRUDE STEIN and her Sancho Panza, Alice B. Toklas, came laughing into the Monterey Peninsula last Sunday and went laughing out to go and stir up San Francisco, Berkeley, Palo Alto on her way home to France. They are real people; that was noticeable in Paris, but it was so much clearer here in Carmel where individuals are rarer. Americans abroad are apt to despair of conforming to type. They try to for awhile, find that they cannot be French or foreign, no matter how much they want to be inconspicuous and so, at last, give up and become themselves. And they discover then that the foreigners accept them for what they are, rather like them so and are happy ever after. They are happy enough in themselves to go home and be odd and happy. Gertrude Stein was fat; she put up with her weight, dressed for it, made over her Ford for a wide driver, ate heartily of the food a hearty eater likes: she had queer ideas about commas and other features of writing and the arts. Well, she accepted and uttered them, with grace and laughter, and—and a suppressed world laughed with her. Of course, she discovered something, being herself alone, she hit upon some practises other original writers and painters learned and put to use. Now, after thirty years she comes home and finds no change, makes one. She encourages others to go ahead and make changes. One of her most hilarious theses is that English, the language of the English, has to be fitted to American uses.

Another is that the old ways of telling stories, our old (English) narrative forms are used up and we Americans, we Carmelites, have to strike some new forms to suit our forms of living and communication. So she comes in like a breeze, laughs like thunder and drives on like a smile in the rain, with Alice Toklas looking around everywhere for windmills to be charged by Gertrude Stein. I don't know how others may like them; all I know is that they are a cure for my sort of sickness.

THAT LOBBY scandal in our legislature is a mistake. All legislatures have lobbies. I never met a legislature that didn't have a lobby to steer it away from ideals to business; can't imagine legislatures without a fringe of lobbyists, I really can't. A lobby is one of the oldest and most American of our institutions and it's too bad to expose one to shame. The lobby is a place where good legislators can go when they have done their best in the legislature and been disgraced and defeated for their efforts to keep the state right. I used to be prejudiced against lobbyists till I learned by experience that they and their purposes are producing the big changes the reformers hold up.

BUSINESS MEN are evidently recovering their self-respect.

TED COOK, the humorist, finds comfort in the observation that all is sound with us at bottom, because we may be there for some time yet.

THERE IS espionage everywhere these days. It's a blooming bother, not because they get you, but because they don't. Reminds me of Paris after the war. Once over there, I was kicking about the spies set on me and Baker, the Secretary of War, heard my grumblings. He laughed, but he understood and acted. "Can you come around to my hotel to-morrow?" he invited. At the time indicated, I called and as I entered his room, I noticed a man half-dressed and shaving in the bath room. Baker drew me on up to where he was sitting and said: "Now you tell me all about your trip in to Russia, tell me everything you saw, what the Bolsheviks are trying to do and give me your opinions about it all." I was full of the subject and was glad to open up to anybody, especially an expert whom I had seen at the very same job in Cleveland under Tom Johnson; Newton Baker was sure to "get" my story of Revolution in Russia. And he did; I told him everything in detail and he grabbed it with all his experience and understanding. While I was trying to show the Secretary of War that the Russians had really done our job and put over the reforms we had all failed at, the shaver came out of the bath room, fully dressed in a Colonel's uniform and halted at salute. Baker grinned and very formally introduced me to the head of the U. S. Secret Service in Paris, whose men had been reporting my enthusiasm for Soviet Russia. Baker had been drawing me out on the subject upon which I was suspect. Well, I went on to the Colonel and I guess I tried to convert him to the revolution. When he left I turned, not elated, to Baker who had thus exposed me to arrest, and Baker said very calmly:

"Now I think you will have no more trouble with detectives."

No use wasting spies on me, when the chief of them knew all I knew and hoped and could possibly say. The detectives were called off, all except those I had made friends with and Bolsheviks out of. Why don't spies ask a fellow what they

want to find out? I'll tell that and more.

ONE OF my secret ambitions was to be a spy, to serve in the secret service of my country. It would break into the regular service badly. I'd tell 'em the truth. I stopped a war once by reporting some facts to President Wilson, facts his own spies could not or did not get. Anyway they were facts I got from under the noses of "the secret". Spies in the hire of employers in industrial struggles say I wouldn't stay in their service, that the employers would not like my facts, THE facts.

"IT SEEMS that somewhere in the legendary past of louse history an offspring of a free living form not unlike our book louse found that life could be infinitely simplified if, instead of having to grub for food in straw, under tree bark, in moss or lichen, in decaying cereals and vegetables, it could attach itself to some food-supplying host and sit tight." So says Professor Hans Zinsser in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January. "The louse sacrifices a liberty that signifies chiefly the necessity for hard work, etc., * * * and by adapting itself to parasitism has attained the ideal of bourgeois civilization, though its methods (of getting food, shelter and clothing) are more direct than those of business and banking, and its source of nourishment is not its own species."

CARTER GLASS of Virginia objects to the phrase "and—or" which lawyers have fallen in love with and legislators love writing into their bills. He's spoiling a lot of fun with his comment that a man who doesn't know whether he means "and" or "or" isn't fit to write a statute. That's true; lots of legislators don't know how to write a law but what of it? Has a man got to make up his mind whether he means "and" or "or" before he can function?

CHESTER ROWELL, the editor-columnist of the *Chronicle*, is an important voice among us, rare and reasonable, and should be listened for in all our crises. He is a Liberal. Liberalism is dying; I know that subjectively and by the same token, I realize that I cannot express it as the immortals like Rowell can. They are sincere, balanced and articulate. They honestly believe that reasonable pacifism can be against war-like Fascism and pacifist Communism, both at the same time, in the same syllogism. The two are both against capitalist democracy, aren't they? Both against Liberalism? In my narrowed view, History—Rowell's history and mine—the course of the common events of our experience has forced our liberal minds to decide some of the old issues we used to balance upon and commanded us to "shinney on" a side. A lot of people, especially young people are coming out against war and seeing that the Communists also are against war and the Fascists for it, they are getting together with the Communists under the slogan Rowell dislikes—a convention "against War and Fascism".

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AGAINST WAR AND FASCISM

WITH delegates from five western states and from a Northwest Congress, the First Pacific Coast Congress Against War and Fascism will be held in San Francisco April 28.

This congress, endorsed by a large number of trade unions and political organizations, follows a similar event of national dimensions held in Chicago last September. The Chicago Congress, presided over by Harry F. Ward, now chairman of the American League Against War and Fascism, was attended by 3,332 delegates representing 1,807,201 people.

In a statement the regional committee arranging the Pacific Coast Congress, headed by Lincoln Steffens, claims: "In the growth of Fascist methods of suppressing the right of the majority of the population by armed force and violence, the Pacific Coast states lead every section of the country." Referring to claims of legal methods of suppression, the committee states: "Bills now pending before the several Pacific Coast legislative bodies will, if enacted, remove the last vestiges of freedom of speech, press, or assembly . . . It is by such governmental practices that the private armies (vigilantes) of Mussolini and Hitler were developed, and by such governmental policy that the way was paved for fascist forces which are leading to the loss of our civil liberties and to the outbreak of suicidal international war." "It is to accomplish this task that we unite in support of this congress. It is to formulate a program of concrete struggle that we appeal for the widest possible participation by all opponents of war on the Pacific Coast."

Among organizations that will send delegates to the congress are: S. F. Council Democratic Party, National Technocracy League, California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, Communist Party and a number of A. F. of L. labor unions. Other endorsers include the International Labor Defense and the Pacific Coast Branches of the American League Against War and Fascism.

Among the individuals endorsing the Congress are Tom Mooney; State Assemblyman Ritchie; William Sanders of the Ornamental Iron Workers Union; Ella Winter, writer; Langston Hughes, Negro Poet; Ben Legere of the S. F. Council, Democratic Party; Harry Mills of the Sailors Union of the Pacific; Dr. Thomas Addis of the Democratic Business and Professional Group of San Francisco; Leo Gallagher, labor attorney; Rev. Robert Whitaker and others.

The San Francisco Congress will take place at Carpenters Hall on Sunday, April 28.

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A Western Journal of Fact and Opinion

Published every Friday at Carmel, California. P. O. Box 1300
Telephone, Carmel 14

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Ten cents a copy. Two dollars a year. One dollar for six months. Twenty-five cents for one month's trial. Canadian: Two dollars and twenty-five cents a year. Foreign: Two dollars and fifty cents

GERTRUDE STEIN COMMA

BY ELLA WINTER

WHEN all the tumult has died there is still a great deal to say about Gertrude Stein. Whether you understand what she is after or not, she is a challenging writer and a challenging figure in the literary world. A shrug of the shoulders and an attempt (usually inadequate) to imitate her still annoyingly do not end the subject.

Since her return to this country early this year Miss Stein has published several books* and a careful perusal of them makes somewhat clearer to the reader who is willing to take the trouble to find out, what she is after. Particularly do her *Lectures in America* unravel some puzzles. To be understood they have to be read aloud, as all her work is written to be read aloud. Then, even if you don't get the sense, at least you get the cadences and her singing rhythm is frequently very beautiful. *Four Saints in Three Acts* abounds in these and all who saw the opera sung by Negroes with sets done in cellophane in New York agreed that it was a great experience. With so much written today that is meant to make sense and doesn't, such as reports in the Hearst newspapers, it is a relief to read something that doesn't intend to make sense in the ordinary sense and so sets you free to use some of your unused senses to make sense. Read the pigeon on the grass alas passage and see if it doesn't move you as much, a great deal more, than for instance Tennyson's "of immemorial elms and murmuring of innumerable bees".

If a magpie in the sky on the sky can not cry if the pigeon on the grass alas can alas and to pass the pigeon on the grass alas and the magpie in the sky on the sky and to try alas on the grass alas the pigeon on the grass the pigeon on the grass and alas.

Gertrude Stein's repetition is not just repetition. She explains what it is in the *Lecture on Portraits and Repetition*.

Is there repetition or is there insistence? I am inclined to believe there is no such thing as repetition. And really how can there be? . . . Once started . . . expressing anything there can be no repetition because the essence of that expression is insistence, and if you insist you must each time use emphasis and if you use emphasis it is not possible while anybody is alive that they should use exactly the same emphasis.

A frog hopping and a bird singing vary their insistence, and so do humans telling a story. Listen, consciously listen the next time a person tells you a story—not to what they are telling you but the way they are telling it. "And then I sez to him, I sez, sez I, when he asks me what I thinks of it, I sez to him, I sez . . ." Just watch—I mean listen.

These lectures are all shot through with homely little illustrations from Gertrude Stein's life. She went from California when she was about seventeen to live with "a whole group of very lively little aunts" in Baltimore, and there she began to listen consciously to what anybody was saying. And there she began to notice the difference between repetition and insistence and many other things such as the need to listen and talk at the same time. "One may really indeed say that that is the essence of genius, of being most intensely alive, that is being at the same time one who is talking and listening." She keeps everything alive, intensely alive all the time. She is so concretely interested in America because she is interested in its vitality (as are most European visitors, only they aren't al-

ways so aware that that is really the thing that grips and fascinates them after their own more dying Europe). She tells you how she began to wonder about certain problems and then to find answers to those and then to wonder about others . . . she "bothered" while she wondered, but when she got her answers, as she got the answers to what really is the difference between prose and poetry, what did she feel about nouns, and commas, and adverbs, and descriptions of people, and the relation between the inside and the outside reality of people, when she had written a book about the thing she was wondering about that was the time when she felt she had her answer and then she would begin to wonder about something else. And the quality of her wonder and her constantly alive and moving and changing wonder she gets into these pages, so that you go through the adventure with her and are stimulated and excited and confused and then cleared up as you are when you're trying to remember something and can't and then suddenly do remember.

This is what makes Gertrude Stein a perpetually alive and stimulating writer whether you "understand" the meaning of the sentences she writes or whether you do not.

And this is what has attracted the vital American people—especially the young people the length and breadth of America—to her, as she is attracted to the young people, on this her first visit to her homeland in twenty-eight years. Their vitality calls to her and her vitality calls to them and when they get together inevitably something exciting happens and Gertrude Stein tries to express it, to say it, in sentences and phrases and words not that say it but that are it.

In wondering about her portraits of people she wondered:

"If they are themselves inside them what are they and what has it to do with what they do. And does it make any difference what they do or how they do it, does it make any difference what they say or how they say it. Must they be in relation with any one or with anything in order to be one of whom one can make a portrait. I began to think a great deal about all these things.

And when Gertrude Stein wonders she is courteous enough to her subject to wonder all around it and for a long time and in and out of it, in nouns and without names and really. She wonders in rhythm and in cadences and she rouses wonder in you and she never answers your wonders because that would end it, that would be death. And she made up her mind very early in life that the thing about life and the only thing about life was life.

At any rate she broke new paths. She challenged the traditional ways of writing and using punctuation and nouns and adjectives and adverbs. She was intensely alive to new combinations of words and phrases and sentences. And she could communicate her excitement to many writers who have digested and used her wonder in their own writing. The newest group of very young writers many of whom want to write about the working-class and proletarian subjects are more consciously interested just now in content than in form, thinks Gertrude Stein; but they unconsciously already use forms she has made familiar. Many of them would not write the way they are writing but for Gertrude Stein. She is wondering about narrative now and so are they. She thinks the

old traditional novel form is dead and so do they. She is wondering what will become of the narrative, what form will it take, and she is experimenting with it, and they are experimenting with it, and she is experimenting with it, and they are experimenting with it. Many of them don't know she was a path-breaker for them, she doesn't always know it and because she isn't interested in politics she tends not to bother about them. But she has influenced them and her bold challenging of existing conventions in writing match their bold challenging of existing conventions in social organization and social thinking as well as the expressing of that thinking. Only change is possible in Gertrude Stein's outlook, the only permanent and unchanging thing is change and without change it is death. "I am certain that what makes American success is American failure."

Gertrude Stein wants to adapt the English language for American use: the tight little formed little island England had other uses for English than has the sprawling vital American continent. The chain of American literary innovators who have adapted English to new American purposes to her consists of Emerson, Poe, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Henry James and Gertrude Stein. In the past thirty years it has been Gertrude Stein. She thinks so and so why not say so. She is the next link but she is also the break in the tradition. She is the innovator.

She is explaining the aliveness of literature in the Elizabethan period:

There was then at this period constant choice, constant decision, and the words have the liveliness of being constantly chosen.

That is what makes that the literature that it is.

And however obscure you may think her there is not a moment that she is not trying to make herself quite clear to you:

"I am trying not to give to myself but to you a feeling of the way English literature feels inside me."

Well about commas which is what this piece started out to talk about. Gertrude Stein early on felt they were servile and she didn't like them and because she didn't like them she would have nothing to do with them. That's why she is a revolutionary. She doesn't like a thing that most people think is necessary to life, that they think you simply can't do without, she doesn't like it so she does without it. Commas for example.

Their use is not a use, it is a way of replacing one's own interest and I do decidedly like to like my own interest my own interest in what I am doing. A comma by helping you along holding your coat for you and putting on your shoes keeps you from living your life as actively as you should lead it and to me for many years . . . the use was positively degrading

So Gertrude Stein is a path-breaker, a revolutionary and a torch for those who feel like not using or putting up with the using of anything that to them is particularly degrading. Gertrude Stein is a revolutionary in writing and in thinking and in feeling and so she is a revolutionary.

And she is the next bridge between the last two eras: the conventional stuffy outlived Georgian era that thought you had to write the way the grammar books said and live the way the people who run things said and the era when people will write the way they see and feel and live and like, and live the way they see and feel and live and like because they see and feel and like that way and because there is no one and nothing to stop them. Gertrude Stein is a bridge and whoever has

understandingly walked across that bridge can never walk back.

*Four Saints in Three Acts, by Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House \$1

Portraits and Prayers, by Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House \$2.50

Lectures in America, by Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House \$2.50



MAYBE HE KNEW

WILLIAM H. CROCKER said after the longshoremen's strike in San Francisco a year ago; "There will be no more labor troubles in San Francisco for a generation to come."

Perhaps the critics of Mr. Crocker's statement did the gentleman an injustice. Perhaps he knew what he was talking about. At any rate, events of this week indicate that he was right.

Substantial increase in pay and shorter working hours have been granted to approximately 9,000 seamen, according to the announcement of the arbitration board appointed as an aftermath of the strike last year. This means about \$100,000 in increased pay, or a million and a quarter dollars a year.

That's an effective way to stop labor troubles and it is possible that Mr. Crocker had that method in mind. At any rate, it shows a healthy state of mind on the part of somebody which surprises us in the midst of this wave of labor exploitation which has been sweeping California. It only goes to prove what we have been contending for some time—you can put the quietus on the rumblings of so-called revolutions and spike the guns of the so-called Reds if you take their ammunition away and remove the targets they are shooting at.

It also goes to show—that this million and a quarter dollars increase in a year—that the payers have got it, anyway. They battle to the last ditch with the cry that ruin faces them, but it is shown that they can do it if they will. What a waste of time and money these battles against fair wages and decent working conditions are. In the end the employers pay, or in the end they must pay—else there's that angel with the flaming sword hovering over them.

—L. B. T.



CONSERVATIVE LADY

*Her ancient hoard of prejudice
Is treasured out of sight,
Just as she screens her furniture
From the too eager light.*

*For when the summer sun shines in
She quickly pulls the blind,
And on each new idea she draws
The curtain of her mind.*

—INGA SMITH

CHRISTIAN VS. COMMUNIST

BY RAY N. STUDDT

MINISTERS of the church are in significant numbers running with hounds that are baying against communism. They, the ministers, I mean, are raising the cry that the world must choose Christianity or communism. The suggestion is arresting. E. Stanley Jones, most famous of Methodist missionaries, said more than a year ago, "We have got to provide an alternative to Marxian communism or succumb to it. And the only way to beat them is to beat them to it."

The thought is staggering. Imagine Christianity competing with communism as a revolutionary force in modern world process! Imagine the kind of Christianity that could do it! These gentlemen of the cloth who suggest that their religion is about to enter the lists against the followers of Marx and Lenin are either contemplating a world-shaking revolution within the church or babbling mere nonsense.

What can be an alternative to Marxian communism? So far I have failed to discover in current Christian writings anything that purports to be that. If Stanley Jones has offered any such alternative I have failed to see it. Responsible church leaders are seemingly either unable or unwilling to commit themselves to a concrete program.

There is a rising tide of criticism of the evils that afflict us. There are few amongst the clergymen who are not genuinely distressed over the sufferings of their fellowmen, but they are still fewer who understand the nature of the process that is causing and steadily increasing this suffering. If Christianity is to offer an alternative cure for the world's ills it must undertake to diagnose its malady.

The stock phrases with which the preachers have castigated sinners are in no sense an alternative for Marxian analysis of the contemporary process. The reiteration that selfish and stubborn men are the cause of the present slowing up of the necessary economic activities leaves us at the mercy of those men. If there can be no relief until these men permit it there is no ground for hope.

The preachers have never been able to convert all the selfish and stubborn men and since, according to their own diagnosis, the economic order yields its richest rewards to that type of men and puts them in charge of its operation, it follows that such men as are converted are merely thrust out of any real influence in the system.

The emphasis which Christianity has placed upon the saving of the individual makes it impossible for it to save society. The traditional approach of the church to the problems of the world must be abandoned if it is to be able to offer an alternative to Marxian communism. The revolutionary power of the communists lies in the fact that they believe society can be reconstructed so that it will not give its choicest rewards to the stubborn selfish men the church deplures.

Stubborn selfish men are not perturbed by the fulminations of the preachers. They help to pay their salaries so long as the preachers are careful to stick to fulminating, because they know that even such a major miracle as the conversion of one or more of the master-minds of that high-handed order would merely result in a further concentration of power amongst those unconverted. But these same men are greatly disturbed

when anyone proposes to modify the economic process so that it can not longer be controlled by them.

If Christianity is really bidding for a place along side of Marxian communism as a world force it must abandon its age-long contention that personalities make history. It must realize that character and personality are formed by the type of activity imposed upon men to gain a livelihood. It must recognize the supreme folly of teaching unselfishness as a moral virtue while the competitive struggle for a living makes of selfishness a survival value.

It is here that the fundamental hypocrisy of the church exists. To teach men to observe the Golden Rule in a world such as ours is equivalent to sending a man out into a tiger-infested jungle with no defense except the words, "Nice pussy!" Conceivably such defense might allow a man to pass through the place unclawed, but it would leave the jungle in the possession of the tigers.

The revolutionary quality of Marxian communism lies in the fact that it proposes to challenge the supremacy of the tigers. Until Christianity is willing to do as much it is useless for its ministers to attempt to get the world to choose between communism and Christianity.

The world is rapidly coming to feel that it is going to be communism or . . . but among the alternatives for which it gropes, I suppose that, outside the minds of these preachers, no one ever thinks of Christianity.

And yet Christianity could be an alternative for Marxian communism. Christianity could return to the stock from which it sprang and recover a social vision that would make it a real force in the creation of new forms of life.

The word Christ is itself pregnant with social implications. The Jewish hope of Messiah was a social hope connected with the realization of the prophetic hopes of men like Amos who demanded justice for the oppressed and the poor. The Greek Christos was the Jewish Messiah. The Jewish hope was material and concerned with a new world order. If it was implemented with an expectation of miracle, that is because it was born in an age when miracle was as much the accepted mode as science and invention are today.

Of course, Christianity could not be an exclusive alternative for Marxian communism. It would have to use Marxian communism to achieve its age-long dream of the brotherhood of man. That doctrine is either communistic or hypocritical. If "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof", then by no stretch of the imagination can the theory of property rights upon which capitalism is based be true. And if the Lord is the Father of us all, then the earth and the fulness thereof is community property. Communism seeks to set up an economic order based on that assumption. Christianity can do no less if it is true to its historic origin.

But, and this is the important part of the whole argument, this Christian communism does offer an alternative to Marxian communism at the point where the tradition of Jesus enters into the process. The Marxist would rule that tradition out. The Christian would leave it in. Both, in order to affect the direction of process, will have to make use of whatever forces are available for making the change.

The tradition of Jesus is deeply rooted in American life. It is doubtful if revolution can make progress successfully if

it must go counter to that tradition. If it does it seems certain that much that is beautiful and satisfying will be lost during the struggle.

Jesus and Marx were both Jews. A synthesis between them is possible. Perhaps it is necessary. But this synthesis will turn out to be a genuine alternative both to communism and Christianity as they now exist. The new product may be in the making in the American pot. Students of social process will watch the revolutionary struggle in the United States with that open-mindedness necessary to a full use of all the forces available for creating the new world order.

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JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS

SOME OF THEIR PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES

BY BENJ. ELLISBERG

SPENCER's conception of a perfect society may be as true as it is simple. At any rate, a place "where the evolution of one individual may proceed without hindering the evolution of other individuals" is not to be rejected lightly. Economically it would seem to indicate—to one of the present generation—a classless society, a commonwealth based on harmony of economic and social interests between an individual and a group; while psychologically it suggests a high degree of sympathetic understanding and a desire to cooperate.

However that may be, the Jewish Community Centers and similar institutions do not find themselves in an ideal society. They exist and structurally reflect the present day order based on classes with widely divergent interests and on competition of every individual with all other individuals. Since the doors of these institutions are open to all classes, their management is in the same difficulty as every broad governing body under capitalism—it finds itself between the poor whose interests demand many social changes, whose intelligence and organization must be developed if the desired changes are to be realized, and the rich who have much to lose in case of such changes and whose great influence in society is far out of proportion to their numerical strength.

This basic difficulty is further increased by the fact that the Centers are called upon to meet a number of typically Jewish problems. The misfortune of the Jewish people is that for a number of centuries they had been driven to commercial pursuits under highly unfavorable conditions. The results were very injurious to the nation physically, mentally and emotionally, at the same time furnishing ammunition for anti-semitic attacks. The conscious national effort, if such there be, must obviously be toward the return to useful productive activities on the land and in the industries. Wherever this has been tried the effects were most desirable in benefiting those who

made such changes of occupation and in overcoming anti-semitism.

Objectively then, the Jewish wage earners need and deserve all possible aid. The Centers, being at least partly charitable institutions, should be expected to supply such aid. Apparently they do. For fairly reasonable charge and occasionally free they supply facilities for recreational and educational activities. But here the influence of the rich makes itself felt. The rich provide most of the funds directly or through some charitable agency; they select the leadership and create a distinctly patronizing atmosphere in which a worker is made to feel apologetic, grateful and willing to ape his "superiors".

Educational activities, consciously or unconsciously, are being used not so much to provide opportunities for self-development and for critical acquisition of vital knowledge, as for inoculating the victims with the capitalistic apologetics of "safe" instructors. Respect for the "prominent people" who condescend to address the Center groups is carefully nursed. All "embarrassing" questions are frowned upon, freedom of discussion is emasculated, those who persist in trying to get at the truth are branded "red", ridiculed and ostracized by both the members of the staffs and the conservative part of the membership. Of course, there are exceptions here and there, but on the whole this depressing picture is correct.

Meanwhile, history does march on. The breakdown of our economic system is undeniable. The people are getting tired of suffering privations while commodities are being destroyed "to keep up the prices". Unmistakable swing of the masses to the left throws the capitalists into a panic. Fascism is used to postpone the adjustment of social institutions to the new material possibilities. What will the Jewish Community Centers and similar organizations do? Will they serve the masses and through them the cause of mankind, or will they prostitute themselves at the command of that unnatural and tragic monstrosity—the Jewish fascist?

The course which the majority of the Jewish executives will take is not difficult to predict. As one of them recently stated, "the army of the unemployed is not what a person would want to join". But it would be really tragic if the rank and file membership of the Centers failed to recognize and to meet the challenge.

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A YOUTH CONGRESS

BY CLIFTON AMSBURY

WE'RE going to have a Youth Congress!

Perhaps that means little to you. And perhaps I cannot convey to you what it means to me. But I can set down events in a more or less intelligible order, so I'll try to tell about four Youth Congresses.

1. One which did happen.
2. One which did not happen.
3. Another which did happen.
4. One which will happen.

1. About 2:30 a.m. February 28, 1934, I first heard of the Southern California Congress of Youth. It was to convene

for its second session March 3. I had to work February 28 and March 2 and 3. I was more than 400 miles away and had neither money nor transportation. But I went! I also attended the May 30 session.

2. I tried to start a Congress of Youth in the San Francisco Bay area. I talked to many people, all of whom were interested. There were two reactions. Most said, "That's a swell idea. When you get it going invite me around to look it over." Two or three said, "They tried that last year, but nobody came except a bunch of communists." One explained, "The 'call' they sent out appealed only to ones who were sincerely interested and willing to get in and work to make it. Down in Southern California they spent six months in preliminary organization."

I was discouraged before I tried anyone in San Francisco itself.

3. Viola Ilma came back from Germany where she saw the Nazi youth organization. She called a Youth Congress in New York. To her Congress came representatives of nearly two million young people, representatives of religious youth, of radical youth, of all kinds of youth.

Miss Ilma had a program; she had already drawn up resolutions for the congress to adopt. She expected the American Youth in Congress assembled to rubber-stamp the New Deal. But the New Deal was over a year old and the American Youth had lost confidence in it. The Congress revolted; took power out of Miss Ilma's hands; agreed on a minimum program, and arranged for a system of Regional American Youth Congresses.

4. Several Bay Region groups whose national or New York bodies participated in the American Youth Congress have initiated a Northern California American Youth Congress. Some of the East Bay leaders are ones I spoke to last year.

We are going to have a Youth Congress!

Perhaps you wonder what youth it will represent; how it will represent them; on what basis. Will there be voting booths set up over Northern California? Who are "youth" anyway?

Representative government is one of the oldest heritages of the Indo-European peoples—the "Aryans" Hitler talks about. At first it was on a kinship basis. When Athens was settled each clan set up in its own section of the city. But under urban conditions people moved about; different interests localized themselves; it was difficult to go across the city to vote.

So when Solon reorganized the government representation by territorial groups was adopted. By 1900 the idea of territorial representation dominated the whole world.

But interests now are much more complex. How can a business man represent a community of clerks and laborers? How can a Protestant represent a community with a large Catholic element? How can a politician represent anyone but himself?

During the last generation has grown up a new system of representation. It has been the one thing common to the soviets of Russia, the ill-fated Wuhan government of China, the guilds and corporations of the Fascisti and Nazis, the collective bargaining of the New Dealers.

This is the idea of representation by interest groups. To a conservatively brought-up person the thought is at first abhorrent. But do we not have the same thing in an undesirable form in the organized lobbies which infest our capitals? To more and more people it is appealing as a forward step.

This is the basis of the Youth Congresses. They are organizations of organizations. Each group sends delegates in pro-

portion to its strength. They truly represent those who send them, because they belong to the same interest-group.

And what organizations are represented? All youth organizations and youth sections of other organizations. "Youth" is roughly that portion of the population between 18 and 30 years of age.

The congress has been endorsed by labor unions, religious bodies, student groups, political organizations and others. It has backing from prominent citizens and dangerous radicals.

The powers-that-be have cried out: "We got you into this mess. Now it's up to you youngsters to get us out." The Youth Congress is Youth's answer. First we have to decide what to do—then we will see if they will let us do it.

THE THEATER

PASSION IN A BUGHOUSE BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

FROM the standpoint of the Hollywood producer, "Private Worlds", adapted from the Phyllis Bottome novel of the same title, must be the ideal motion picture. It is highly charged with emotion in which sex plays no minor part. It has a good deal of action, the most exhilarating of which is found in the free-for-all fight scene in the men's ward of an insane asylum. It tackles problems not likely to start controversies with the bankers, the church, the censors, the D. A. R. or the American Legion. And at the fadeout it presents them—all neatly solved and tied up in sentimental ribbons—to the audience.

But perhaps it is a little futile to rail at the literature of escape in the movies, since Hollywood is pledged and hedged to the production of little else. We may as well look at "Private Worlds" as a film of escape and decide whether or not it is a good one. I think it's a pretty good one. That is to say it does some pretty adroit escaping. Its setting is an insane hospital wherein are gathered the oddly assorted wrecks of a maladjusted social system, yet it manages to tell its story without any embarrassingly penetrating search after causes.

"Love and money," opines Dr. Claudette Colbert, sitting at her desk with a sheaf of case-histories in her hand, "seem to be the causes of all our troubles." The film then goes blithely on to prove that it is nine-tenths love. It seems we all have our little problems in life and that when these problems get too difficult we retire into little private worlds of our own in a futile effort to escape, rather than face them. A fine film could be made on this theme, a film which would dig under the surface of things-as-they-are and reveal the fact that our biggest trouble today is that we are trying to live in a social system no longer able to cleanse itself of its own decay. But such a film would inevitably arrive at the conclusions reached a number of decades ago by a bewhiskered old German and therefore would never pass the censors.

Well, ennahoo, Dr. Colbert is not too busy with the problems of the inmates of her booby-hatch to moon a bit over her own. It appears that she once loved a chap who took her to Coney Island, won her a doll in a shooting gallery and then left her flat. She threatens to go through the rest of her life

dragging the doll with her and pining for what the film calls her "ghost lover". But Dr. Charles Boyer, new head of the institution, prevents that. He falls in love with her and marries her.

He has his little problem, too. His sister (Helen Vinson) once playfully homicided a husband and is now intent upon obtaining another by larceny. The intended victim is Dr. Joel McCrea, of the hospital staff and spouse of Joan Bennett—who, as you may easily see, has her problem, too.

Miss Bennett hears voices in a thunderstorm and falls downstairs, cracking her head necessitating surgery, which device miraculously restores her husband's love for her. Then Dr. Boyer sends his hussy sister packing away and—as aforementioned—substitutes his corporeal self for the ghost in Miss Colbert's private world. Neat, hey?

Boyer, a Hollywood newcomer, is a telling actor, a fellow worthy of a better vehicle. Miss Colbert gives her role a glow of life and often makes it nearly convincing. This is paying her no small compliment. The film is above average in acting and general production, but, alas! the only thing new or refreshing about it is the insane asylum.

THE "Wedding Night" reveals Blonde Anna Sten as a Polish farm girl in New England, milking kine, chopping cordwood, harvesting crops and rocking off land without ever disturbing the enamel with which each eyelash is so carefully painted. She is about to be married off by her father and set at the chore of brooding babies on a 40-acre tract when Author Gary Cooper appears on the scene.

Cooper has been a best seller author, but as the film opens we find him slipping because of a certain repetitiousness induced by the assimilation of too many cases of scotch. So he goes back to the family homestead, adjacent to the Polish bailiwick, in search of inspiration. His wife returns to the glitter of New York, but the placid allure of Miss Sten is too much for Cooper. He writes her into his new book and decides to divorce his spouse.

From this point on, my friends, the film is as sexy as anything you could wish for in your most concupiscent mood. Miss Sten loves Cooper, but marries the Polish farm lad just the same. On the wedding night he gets drunk and the bridal bedroom scene threatens to become an orgy. The evening ends with a fistfight between Cooper and the groom in which Miss Sten is knocked down a stairway and killed. At the fadeout we see Cooper standing in a window waxing stolidly mournful after his manner in "A Farewell to Arms". Behind him stands his wife, who has Learned Her Lesson and will never leave him again if he will only take her back, which the audience hopes very much he'll do, because the wife is Helen Vinson, who registers very well in the first sympathetic role the films have given her.

The whole thing somehow becomes pointless in spite of the possibilities it suggests. With thousands of immigrant farmers struggling for existence in America these days, "Wedding Night" chooses one sufficiently prosperous to buy a \$5,000 plot of land for cash and give it to his daughter for a dowry. It is this family whom the young author discovers in his search for genuine people who are close to the soil. Miss Sten's acting in its present state will never make her a film idol. She is a commonplace looking young woman, even for a cinema star, and her performances are uniformly undistinguished. Perhaps her choice of Hollywood over the Soviet film studios was not entirely voluntary, after all. Cooper's work is far

better and more sincere. There is an effectiveness in his incessant understatement of emotional themes and I have yet to see him resort to mugging. Miss Vinson also outshines the star in histrionic achievement.

ROBERTA", adapted from the stage success, is just an ordinary romance-with-music. It is redeemed by the expert dancing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, but the waits between their turns of hoof magic are long and wearisome. "The Gay Divorcee" was far more joyous an affair.

THE "Night Is Young" is an operetta with third-rate Romberg music. Ramon Novarro is a grand duke and Evelyn Laye a ballerina with whom he falls rather unintentionally in love while waiting to be wedded to a princess. Charles Butterworth and Una Merkel are amusing. It's fair entertainment on an old theme with a new twist or two.

MUSIC

EDITED BY
SIDNEY ROBERTSON

ALIX YOUNG MARUCHESS was a violinist and gave up her concert career as a fiddler in order to devote herself to playing and making known that beautiful instrument of the 17th and 18th centuries, the viola d'amore. To make a larger repertoire possible and provide contrast and variety she has chosen also to play the viola on her programs. She has recently given two concerts in San Francisco and will be heard in the south soon. One of the concerts in San Francisco was a sonata recital with Margaret Tilly which included a sonata by Arthur Bliss, a contemporary American.

At her Carmel recital Mme. Maruchess, accompanied by Carolyn Jordan, presented an 18th century suite for viola d'amore by Marc which had great style. Among the other things she played on this instrument was an old air called "La Romanesca" which was written to show off the possibilities in the use of harmonics on the viola d'amore. Unlike our modern forms of the viol family the viola d'amore has a set of strings, running parallel to and tuned in unison with those played upon, which vibrate delicately in sympathy with related tones, so that when, in particular, the arpeggio of D major is played (the instrument being normally tuned to this arpeggio), an ethereal reminiscence of each tone lingers in the air after the player's fingers and bow have moved on to another note. This contributes to the intimate and personal character of the viola d'amore, which caused it alone among the viols to be named the "Viol of Love".

THE Moore double-keyboard piano jarred out of their complacency those who think of the piano as having completed its evolution, like the violin which has not changed for three hundred years. Now a young pianist and writer named David Barnett has been demonstrating in the East a new sort of keyboard which he calls the enharmonic keyboard. It fits into the ordinary grand piano case, but provides three banks of keys instead of the usual one. Mr. Barnett claims for it that it removes certain technical difficulties for the perform-

er, once mastered; but like Miss Christy's instrument it requires special study of its resources and practice in their use.

THE MARY GARDEN has taken up temporary residence in San Francisco, engaged by the Standard Oil Company of California on its Standard Symphony broadcasts. Listening in on Thursday night, April 4, it was pleasant to hear Mary's dramatic voice since that was possible without watching her in perpetual motion, and one was struck by the fact that what she had to say was strictly related to what the orchestra played. Saint-Saens was discussed because he had a place on the program, and Debussy, likewise, for the same reason. This is novel and refreshing to listeners who gasped to hear the spinning song from Faust (which really isn't a spinning song, for Marguerite might have sung *Le Roi de Thule* equally well had she been darning socks or drawing water from a well) interposed between acts of Aida when Geraldine Farrar was doing the commentating for the Metropolitan Listerine broadcasts. Conversation about Lawrence Tibbett's desire to sing Boris Godounov between acts of this year's American opera was excusable, however dull, because the opera was so poor that nothing both interesting and relevant could possibly have been devised. But in general Farrar's talks have organized in pursuit of some idea which has no esthetic basis and which has obliged radio audiences to listen to a great deal of third-rate music hauled in by the ears where it doesn't belong. Rethberg's superb singing of Aida wasn't to be improved by any number of spinning songs (Miss Farrar sang a line or two of six) and if the later couldn't find anything really relevant to say or sing she should have kept very still, very still indeed.

Of course, the radical error behind the growing practice of supplying the radio public with commentators between acts (these being, it is understood, in addition to remarks about the opera itself by an announcer) is the fact that its real reason for existence lies in the anxiety of the broadcasting company to pepper its advertising with a dash of cayenne in the form of a much-publicized personality. This only serves to intensify that weakness of American concert-goers who listen to Paderewski and not to the *Appassionata*, to Kreisler and not to the *Beethoven Concerto in D Major*. This is a state of mind which limits the hearer's capacity for experiencing in any true sense what is presented him, and contrary to appearances does the artist great wrong.

BOOKS

TRACES BATTLE OF LABOR

A HISTORY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN CALIFORNIA, by Ira B. Cross. (Berkeley: University of California Press) \$3

(Reviewed by Harry Conover)

PROFESSOR CROSS has written a remarkably readable account of the turbulent history that is California's as it has been reflected in the wages, hours and conditions of employment of her builders. For the specialist in the field of labor, this book, with its painstaking research, is indispensable. It has an appeal even for the general reader who is becoming

day by day more concerned with social programs.

Beginning with the feudalistic era of the missions, the author traces and describes in detail the situation of the worker through the gold discovery epoch, the incredibly unstable and speculative business circumstances of the '50s, the movement as early as 1865 for an eight-hour day and its stifling in the depression of 1870-77, the anti-Chinese agitation, the gradual abandonment of purely political action and the bitterly-contested organization of trade unions. An appreciative account is given of the leadership accorded the labor movement by such radicals as Frank Roney and Burnette Haskell of Marx's International Workingmen's Association. Mention is made of innumerable strikes and labor leaders down to 1901, after which date more broad outlines are followed. Inescapably, most of the material deals with San Francisco (including a hastily inserted section on the General Strike of 1934), although some attention is paid to the peculiarities of the Los Angeles movement.

This is a scholarly piece of research, with the customary academic shying from the implications of such inquiries. Professor Cross declares it his purpose to provide the historical background necessary for an understanding of the present condition of the labor movement. In some instances, his interpretation of the events utterly fails in this purpose. Despite his recital of incidents occurring under the Labor Council's leadership which culminated in the defeats and despair of 1927, he does not clearly indicate the change in perspective and tactics effected by the militant heads of the General Strike in the face of the opposition and later sabotage by this same Labor Council. Despite his demonstration of the futility of political action without a foundation of trades unionism, he shows no appreciation of the efficacy of such action now that that foundation has been laid. In his treatment of the demagogic Chinese-baiter, Dennis Kearney, Professor Cross seems only to be condemning the man for his brutality and cowardice. Noting the numerous instances in which white laborers were employed to "scab" on Chinese strikers, the reader cannot fail to see that actually the only decent solution lay in the fusion of the white and yellow workers into one union opposing their common exploiter, the employer. And this path of solution extends, of necessity, beyond the "Tomorrow is also a day" philosophy of the A. F. of L. which he so sanguinely applauds. That a new social and political philosophy is being increasingly invoked by labor is a matter of common knowledge, of which the recent strike against the landing of the fascist ship, *Karlsruhe*, the united protests against the Criminal Syndicalism act, and the criticisms of the war-monger, Scharrenberg, are evidence.

Even though he neglects to treat the Mooney case or the status of the agricultural worker, Professor Cross does present enough recent material to invalidate his statement in the preface that "By 1901, the labor movement in California had really got under way . . . and policies had been adopted which have since remained in effect with no changes worth noting".

REMARKABLE BOOK

THE HUMAN BODY, by H. Newell Martin. (Henry Holt & Co.) \$4

(Reviewed by Dr. Herman de Fremery)

THIS is not a new book, but a revision of a remarkable book. Few indeed are the scientific works which, like this one, were first published fifty-four years ago and are still being reprinted. Its excellence is further attested by the fact that it

has been thought worthy of twelve editions, six of them being thorough revisions.

A study of the structure of the human body, of its activities, and of the conditions of its healthy working, it is written simply enough for the general reader and yet accurately and detailed enough for the student. So extensive is research in physiology that a book which would only give an account of the known, and pass by, unmentioned, all things not known but sought, would give an untrue idea of the field. This author has not neglected to discuss those most interesting points which lie on the boundary between what we know and what we hope to know.

As surely as the cultured person of the past needed to know his Greek and Latin classics, the cultured person of the present needs to know his glands and hormones, his diets and vitamins, the practice of immunization, and the latest theory of sleep. An excellent book for the layman's scientific reference shelf.

GENGHIS KHAN TO STEAM TRACTORS

SOVIET JOURNEY, by Louis Fischer. (Smith & Haas)
\$2.50

CHANGING ASIA, by Egon Erwin Kisch. (Alfred A. Knopf) \$3

(Reviewed by Ella Winter)

ONE might say one of these books begins, geographically and culturally, where the other ends. Louis Fischer, the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Nation* for many years, gives an intimate picture of the surface of lives that he came across in a long trip in European Russia and the Caucasus, but he also deals with some of the underlying problems of communism, of Soviet society. He deals with some questions that raise doubts in the minds of the friends of the new society; such ultimate questions as "What will happen when the whole society is built up, and they have all the material goods they need, and all the work can be done in a few hours a day: What then?" And, "What of the bureaucracy, that seems to be growing, with all the red tape a centralized government develops?" And, "What of the intense nationalist feeling being developed, consciously and purposely at present: might that not lead to difficulties?" It is interesting to have these real problems of the new society presented and discussed scientifically, after the many empty objections raised by the average Hearst reader, which any cursory glance at Soviet Russia answers. For, contrary to the common notion, real friends of Soviet Russia ponder her problems instead of merely going into ecstasies over every new hospital or nursery school built. Louis Fischer deals with actual problems, not the queries of an over-heated imagination such as William Henry Chamberlin's.

Fischer shows the real and tremendous strides made, not only in material welfare, in culture and art, science and technics, but also in the scientific understanding and treatment of some of society's worst problems such as crime and prostitution. He shows crime and prostitution vanishing under sensible treatment in Russia, as they are growing in capitalist countries. His book abounds in personality sketches of some of the Soviet leaders which will do much to dispel the idea that Russians don't care about individuality.

Egon Erwin Kisch, a Czech, the beloved "hectic" reporter of five continents, spent a year traveling in Soviet Asia by train, airplane, ox-cart and camel. The present reviewer heard his tales from his own lips in long and fascinating hours

in the Hotel Europa in Moscow in 1931. And almost no story out of wonderland can come up to the life-story of Khassid Mirkulan, sold into marriage as a child, whose father was murdered by bandits, and who, while collecting frogs to cure the illness of an old woman, met a soviet parade on woman's day and so entered the new life. She threw away her veil, she entered a university, she now teaches economics and politics to women still baking cakes of sheep's dung. She tears the metaphorical veil also from the "quaintness" with which we are apt to endow these "strange eastern peoples"; shows the child-marriages, illiteracy, hunger, disease, slavery, deformities, the filth and superstition, the wretchedness, fear and narrow prejudices that dominated her people. And she shows how these are being removed by the twentieth century notions brought in by the Bolsheviks.

Kisch has the gift, rare in reporters, of the light touch, the revealing phrase, the gay and telling humor. His quick mind sees the implication of his story almost before it is related and he imparts his quick excitement to the reader. He glories in the contrasts: from Tigers to Cotton Collectives—psycho-therapy classes in Bokhara—cotton-picking machines hardly yet introduced into twentieth century America being worked by native Uzbeks in Caucasian caps.

Kisch understands the country better than most observers, perhaps better than Fischer. Fischer, in his zeal to write for the American reader who cannot and will not believe the truth about Soviet Russia, almost forgets the main point himself: but Kisch states it in the mosque city of Khojent in Tadjikistan:

"What then are the changes?

"If there had been no other change on this sixth part of the surface of the globe but that exploitation has been done away with—leaving aside the eradication of unemployment, of the misery of children, of illiteracy, of religious superstition, of corruption, leaving aside the fact that a hundred million human beings have been filled with constructive enthusiasm, with knowledge and culture, leaving aside all this—if only for the sake of abolishing exploitation, it would be worth while to live in our day and age."

SCHOOLS OF LIFE

CHARACTER EDUCATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA, Edited by William Clark Trow. (Ann Arbor Press) \$1.25

(Reviewed by Fern McGrath)

RUSSIAN leaders believe that if ideas are really to triumph, if a new society is to replace the old, the very character of the coming generation must be profoundly changed. Hence the great organizations of young people are designed to be "Communist schools of life for youth". In the organizations of the Little Octobrists, from seven to ten years, of the Young Pioneers from ten to fifteen years, and of the Komsomol, from fifteen to twenty-three years, the most modern ideas in education are used to build the organization, the leaders primarily working, consulting and acting with the children. There is ardent inquiry into procedures which will develop individuals motivated to use their knowledge and their skill, not for self-aggrandizement at the expense of their fellows, but for the advancement of all.

The freshness of this book and its boundless faith are impressive. Of special interest to everyone concerned with young people's organizations, it will inevitably stimulate them to new evaluations both of their objectives and of their methods.

CRUMBLING DIKES

THE EXECUTIONER WAITS, by Josephine Herbst.
(Harcourt, Brace & Co.) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Haakon M. Chevalier)

THIS substantial novel is the second in a trilogy. Not having read the first novel, *Pity is Not Enough*, I am unable to evaluate the present one in relation to the first or to appreciate fully the scope of the entire work. Yet the present novel adequately sustains itself, even without the background and the momentum of the first, and there emerges for the reader a vast, manifold, richly interpreted and deeply moving picture of American life.

The Executioner Waits is a social novel, and belongs in what Granville Hicks has called the "great tradition" of American fiction. Miss Herbst has undertaken not merely to give a panoramic view of a central phase of American life, but also to evaluate it in terms of the social and economic forces which condition it. The immediate material of every novelist is, of course, human character and human experience. But the mind that apprehends this material and shapes it into a novel may be—however great the craftsmanship—that of an individualist, a mystic, a victim of fantasies, a proponent of theories of every sort. The mind of Miss Herbst, aside from her gifts as a craftsman, is a well-integrated mind, disciplined in a school of thought that has turned her to a patient and elaborate examination of the specific factors that determine human actions and relationships. And she depicts her characters, not struggling against cosmic forces or destiny or an abstract society, but engaged in the very familiar business of making a livelihood and of seeking plain rewards and gratifications in a society based on private property and competitive enterprise.

The Executioner Waits is a novel of typical middle-class Americans in the troubled period extending from the end of the World War, when thousands of "our boys" were returning to flood the labor market and enjoy the fruits of the democracy which many of them had died to save, to the first year of the depression. With great skill Miss Herbst manages to tell this complex story largely through a detailed account of the lives of the members of three families, the Trexlers, the Wendels and the Chances. She succeeds in keeping the reader's consciousness constantly in touch with the broad American scene, and through a number of devices, some of which recall those of Dos Passos and Jules Romains, weaves into her story without artifice some of the outstanding political and social events of the period as they touch the lives of her characters.

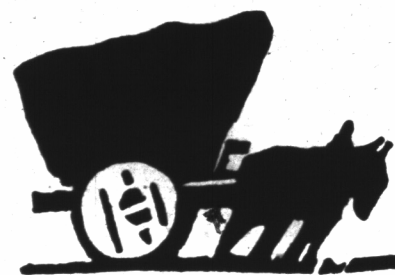
What appears from this novel to be the main theme of the entire trilogy is the manner in which our institutions which were established to insure to all the people an equal opportunity to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness actually operate in the lives of typical middle-class families over a period of several generations. The first volumes covered the decades after the civil war and showed these pushed about by the activities of the great enterprising and ruthless captains of industry, struggling for a precarious foothold, most of them tossed on barren wastes, but hoping always, their imaginations swept along by the great dream of expansion and unlimited wealth that illuminated the horizon. The present volume pictures, in the contrast of two generations, the rapid loss of momentum, the crumbling of the protective dikes against economic insecurity, and the fading of that great dream.

The post-war depression, with its stock crashes and bank

failures and unemployment crisis pushed to the wall a vast number of the small middle class who over the years had somehow managed to carry on their little enterprises. Thousands, like Amos Wendel, lost their heavily mortgaged business and went into bankruptcy. A few, like his banker brother-in-law David Trexler, shrewd, aggressive, unscrupulous, had managed to profit by the misfortunes of the many, and by skilful investments and manipulations got in on the ground floor of the great boom that followed. While Amos Wendel is forced to hire out as a common laborer, and to experience directly the struggles of workers for decent wages, his brother-in-law rises to fortune. Both are slaves of money—Amos through the desperate necessity to make some provision for his family, David through his insatiable desire for more power and wealth. And to a greater or less degree all the characters are compelled to stifle their more human yearnings and potentialities in the brutal struggle of the marketplace.

If the lives of the older generation are tragic, those of the younger generation are even more so. They face an impossible problem of adjustment in a world that has no place for them and that, in terms of what their parents have achieved, or attempted to achieve, is totally devoid of meaning. Some of them, through the accident of experience, come into contact with socialist ideas and become aware of the class struggle. But most of them continue to struggle without hope in the old individualist pattern. Through the story of shabby defeat, however, appear glimpses of new hope. The workers are slowly awakening to a consciousness of their strength. In this novel they are entirely in the background, but they appear directly in a few unforgettable scenes. Big Bill Heywood, Joe Hill and Eugene Debs flash upon the reader's consciousness like prophetic symbols; there are strikes, demonstrations, I. W. W. agitation that fill honest bourgeois hearts with terror; the post-war hysteria which is being re-enacted today is described in vivid detail; and in the last scene David Trexler encounters in the graveyard a group of workers who have come to bury a comrade killed on the picket line. The fever, the jagged tempo, the anguish, the double stream of madness and lucidity that runs through the period are all here. The tense atmosphere of impending catastrophe heightens every incident: the executioner waits . . .

The kinds of incidents Miss Herbst selects are at the same time commonplace and extraordinarily illuminating, doing with exemplary economy the double job of revealing character and of relating the individuals to the social setting. A kind of subterranean stream of poetic insight and imagery flows beneath her prose, which on the surface is pungent, modern, American. She combines the gift of a fresh awareness of beauty and pathos with a hard, sharp lucidity which gives to her testimony a high order of importance as a contribution to the understanding of our time.



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